



Lar Lubovitch Dance Company Moves to the Music

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Lar Lubovitch Dance Company presents stunning pieces of repertory and exciting world premieres at the Joyce Theater February 23- March 7th. Program B consist of *Elemental Brubeck*, *Vita Nova*, and two world premieres: *Coltrane's Favorite Things* and *Dogs of War*. This season marks the Company's 42nd anniversary and the program's themes reflect nostalgia for the past as well as Lubovitch's timeless style and sensibility.

In *Coltrane's Favorite Things*, the dancers generate an exuberant visual realization of Coltrane's 1963 audio recording, to which the dance is set. A large reproduction of Jackson Pollock's iconic Autumn Rhythm (Number 30) hangs as a backdrop while dancers channel the beatniks dressed in somber shades of black, grey and blue. Lubovitch skillfully crafts a correlation between jazz and dance, rather than a straight literal translation of Coltrane's melodies and rhythms into movement. He utilizes quick lifts to accent where the musical notes hit their highs, and incorporates synchronized arm motions that ripple across the stage in cannon when the melody takes flight. Like fingers above piano keys, these waves flutter left and right, all the while moving along a finite direction. At one point, the repeating crash of drum cymbals causes a commotion on stage as dancers swing each other in the air, their partners' legs clicking together in mid-lift to accent the moment of contact between stick and cymbal.

In the more theatrical parts of *Coltrane's Favorite Things*, dancers are satisfyingly cool, with *West Side Story* flair. They smile exuberantly and revel in the music, executing phrases excitedly as if taking a mean jazz solo and loving it. As the music crescendos, the dancers bop their heads, shimmy their shoulders and shake it out as if releasing their bodies from The Man's oppressive hand. At the end of the recorded music, the last two dancers on stage drop to the floor in staggered motions, pausing with the breaks in the music and flailing with the last of the horn's blows. The party is over for those two dancers and the curtain closes, signaling Lubovitch's reflection on the end of a chapter in American culture.

In *Vita Nova*, a stunningly strong and simple duet, Katarzyna Skarpetowska and Brian McGinnis move through a series of structural poses and lifts. The dancers shift between suspended shapes with classical grace and flawless lines while maintaining Lubovitch's modern sense of weight, which informs the grip, pull, and tension between their bodies.

Also a duet, *Dogs of War*, performed by Attila Joey Csiki and Christopher Vo, addresses the relationship between two soldiers and their individual struggles to maintain a sense of humanity during wartime. Images of barbed wire, barricades, and battle scenes are projected on three screens behind the two men. These screens run a symbolic red towards the end of the work.

Dogs of War begins with two soldiers dancing in a militaristic manner. As the most narrative of the night's pieces, the characters then take solos, each confronting their own fears and responsibilities, and eventually engage in a complex confrontation with each other. Although on opposite sides of a war, the two men share in moments of empathy for each other and, in a fleeting passage, care for and cradle each other. A piece as political as *Dogs of War* would be heavy-handed if not for Lubovitch's ability to craft theater rather than theatrics. Although the work and the projected images hint at the Vietnam War, within the overarching program, *Dogs of War* seems less like a look back, and more like a look at how things have yet to change.

With *Elemental Brubeck*, Lubovitch travels a bit further back in time and weaves social dances from the 1950's into a carefree and lighthearted exploration of Dave Brubeck's music. In the program notes, Lubovitch references jazz once again by differentiating the "Solo" from the "Combo." Throughout the piece, the soloist Attila Joey Csiki (dressed in red) acts as a counterpoint to the other dancers (dressed in pastels). The piece ends with Attila Joey Csiki taking a stylized jitterbug-inspired solo while the Combo's dancers clap and cheer him on.

For the Company's anniversary program, Lubovitch clearly incorporates his favorite things. Although drawing heavily from the structure and context of the music he selects, Lubovitch re-imagines the possibilities for jazz rather than relying on their inspirations to carry the works. He transports the audience to a different era and a different mindset, where Pollock's splattered paint hangs in the air and instills abandon into dancers' leaps and turns. Through the luscious full movement that is Lubovitch's signature, the Company's performances offer enjoyment, a sense of nostalgia, and reflection free of judgment.

Official Dance Review by Tze Chun
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Choreography: Lar Lubovitch
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